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ABSTRACT

Papua New Guinea has made tremendous progress by officially recognizing the value of vernacular languages as a resource in the sociocultural, economic, and political development of the country. Many of the strategies of implementation reflect the peculiarities identified with the current momentum in literacy. The strong lower level involvement in all aspects of literacy (planning, administration, funding, buildings, curriculum, materials, evaluation) differs from the experience of other countries whose literacy programs are heavily centralized. The problems of achieving universal literacy in a country with 860 languages are enormous. The task, however, is not impossible given adequate resources. International cooperation has a role to play in the spread of literacy in Papua New Guinea. The Australian government sponsors the Melanesian Literacy project in which people from the Melanesian countries (Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea) are trained as literacy workers by Melanesians in Melanesia itself. Funding assistance should be with the aim of enhancing local literacy programs, and funding should reflect the needs of the people themselves. The availability of expertise in Papua New Guinea does not seem as urgent a problem as it was in the past. Many of the innovations in literacy programs will be refined as time goes on, but the future of literacy in Papua New Guinea is bright. (RS)

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LITERACY IN AN EMERGENT SOCIETY

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

NAIHUWO AHAI

1990
International Literacy Year
Papua New Guinea

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INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR COLLOQUIUM

OCTOBER 9-31, 1990

IMF VISITOR'S CENTER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

LITERACY IN AN EMERGENT NATION.

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

A. Geographic location.

The independent state of Papua New Guinea consists of the eastern half of the island of New Guinea (the western half is a province of Indonesia known as Irian Jaya) and some 600 smaller islands. The country is located just south of the equator, sharing international boundaries with Australia to the south, Indonesia to the west and Solomon Islands to the east.
It has a total land area of 463,840 square kilometres and is divided into 4 regions(the New Guinea islands, the New Guinea Mainland Coastal, the Highlands and Papua). The geography of the country is dominated by mountainous terrain and large swampy areas supporting a population of 3.6 million that is intensely dense in some regions and sparse in others. It is estimated that given the difficult geographic terrain, the land can support a maximum optimum population of 9 million (Ranck in PNG ATLAS).

B. Demography.

1) Papua New Guinea's population according to the three censuses held (1966, 1971, and 1980) were 2.1 million, 2.4 million and 3.0 million respectively.
At a population growth rate of 2.3%, the population is estimated to be 3.6 by 1990 and if current trends continue, the population is expected to reach 4.6 by the year 2000.

2) The age/sex distribution shows a broad base pyramid, a feature of most developing countries, that is usually associated with a rapid growth rate and declining mortality. Approximately 47% of the population is estimated to be under 15 years of age.

3) Urban - Rural distribution.

88% of the population live in the rural areas, involved in subsistence and cash-crop production, while only 12% live in the urban centres. The urban sector is increasing rapidly at he average rate of 4% per annum with Port Moresby - the Capital- growing at 5% per annum. The urban growth rate is mainly due to rural-urban migration.

Regional population distribution varies with the Highlands comprising 33% of the population, the New Guinea Islands 15%, New Guinea Mainland Coastal 28% and Papua 24%.

C. Language

1) Papua New Guinea has 860 languages belonging to 2 main distinct language groups. One third (1/3) of the languages are inter-related and belong to the Austronesian language group while the majority of the languages, many of which are linguistically unrelated, belong to the Non-Austronesian language group. Many of these languages are spoken by very small speech communities constituting less than 15% of the countries population.

2) Languages of Wider Communication.

There are three major languages of wider communication : Tok Pisin, Hiri Motu, English. Tok Pisin is mostly spoken in the northen half of the country but is increasingly becoming spread in the southern half especially around Port Moresby. Hiri Motu is spoken in the Papuan side of the country. These two languages are dorminant in unofficial social interaction while English is predominantly the language for official communication. However, Tok pisin is increasingly being used in official bussiness domains.

D. Political History

The political history of Papua New Guinea has undergone several major changes within the last century. From 1884 to 1914, the two halves of present- day Papua New Guinea were administered entirely separately by different colonial powers.

1) British New Guinea.

From 1884 to 1906, the southern half was under British administration and was known as British New Guinea. In 1906, responsibility for the territory was handed over to newly independent Australia and it was renamed Papua.

2) German New Guinea.

To the north, German New Guinea had been a German colony since 1884. After the First World War, administration was mandated to Australia by the League of Nations. Australia then administered both Papua, and New Guinea but as separate colonies. They were later (1949) ratified as the Trust Territory of Papua and New Guinea. The country gained Independence on the 16th of September 1975 from Australia.

3) Decentralisation.

Two years after Independence(1977), Papua New Guinea adopted the **Organic Law No. 1** which aimed at the redistribution of administrative and economic powers from the National Government to the provincial governments. The policy of decentralisation was seen as a means of pacifying the demands of greater autonomy that was being expressed strongly by several ethnic groups, most notably the Bougainville secessionist movement, the Mataungan association and the Papua Besena movement. The Bougainville secessionist movement stayed dormant for over a decade and erupted in September 1988 resulting in the current economic crisis the country is experiencing.

The 19 provincial governments have Legislative, Executive, Administrative and Financial powers in areas that do not fall in the power domains of the National Government but receive most (93%) of their funding from the national government.

E. Education

Table 1 shows that the number of schools and enrolments has increased over the last 10 years. The only exception being the decrease in enrolments of technical colleges.

Inspite of these increases, Gross enrolment is only 66.1% (Table 2). 33.9% of school age children do not go to school at all and probably do not have any other opportunity to acquire literacy.
Of those who enroll in grade 1, about 65% complete Primary education (35% wastage). Of this lot, 33% go on to secondary education, out of which 70% complete the 4 years of secondary education.

In other words for every 100 school-age children, only 9 children complete secondary education.

II. LITERACY EDUCATION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

A. Prior to Nation-hood

1. Government Policy

Prior to World War II the governments' rationale for education and literacy was to "civilize" the people and to extend their social, political, and economic control over the people in their colonies. The Germans, prior to World War I in New Guinea, chose German and the British and Australians in Papua and in New Guinea after World War I chose English as the languages of education. Since there were limited funds for education, the strategy was to encourage the missions by way of subsidies to include these colonial languages in their education programmes. The government also established some schools but the number of students in these were small in comparison with those in the mission schools. The missions were the dominant influence in the villages and used local languages for basic education and literacy.

After WWII the government sought to extend its influence and to take greater control over education. As a result it established an Education Department. The first Director of Education, W. C. Groves, was trained in anthropology and planned a bilingual system that built on the mission school system. Initial education and literacy was in vernaculars or mission lingua francas with English added later. However, this plan was not effectively implemented.

In the late 1950s the education philosophy moved away from meeting the needs of village societies to developing a nation. External and internal political development put pressure towards developing a nation in which Papua New Guineans would assume equality with expatriates and assume their responsibilities. This implied a greater knowledge of English. The reaction was for the government to move to an exclusively English education system Since there was limited funds to do this the government sought the assistance of the missions. The missions were reluctant to yield their influence in the villages in general and especially in education to the government and a conflict developed between the two. Through legal and financial means the government was able to bring the mission education system under its control. By the time of Independence in 1975 an English only education system was well established.

2. Mission Policy

Missions generally had greater social, political, economic and religious influence in the villages than did the government until well after World War II. Their interests were more toward effective communication with village people for the purposes of religious teaching and improving the quality of life. They accomplished this by developing basic education programmes primarily for children with pastors or catechists generally serving as teachers. Materials generally included the Bible, hymn books, catechisms, primers and readers.

The different missions had different policies on the languages used for literacy. Some chose a locally widespread language which they spread further through their schools. Some chose to use a multiplicity of local languages while others chose to use a lingua franca such as Tok Pisin or Hiri Motu. Many included English as a part of their system to provide a means for further education and to participate in the government's education programme.

For period after World War II when Groves was the Director of Education the government and mission education policies were in harmony. A difference between the two arose when in the 1950s the government policy

shifted towards education for nation building with an emphasis on providing an educated elite. Eventually most missions yielded to the legal and financial incentives to participate in the English education system and abandoned their vernacular programmes. However,many continued with adult literacy programmes in vernaculars or lingua francas and the Lutheran Mission continued its Tok Pisin education system outside the government system. By the time of Independence, the government's English education policy was well established and most missions were cooperating with it.

3. Non-Governmental Organisations

After World War II some NGOs began working in Papua New Guinea in the area of literacy. One of these is the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) which entered Papua New Guinea in 1957. This Christian applied linguistic organisation concentrates on three activities: linguistics, literacy and translation, especially Bible translation. Although it had been involved in bilingual education programmes in other countries, soon after it entered Papua New Guinea the English policy in formal education was strongly enforced. As a result, SIL focussed its efforts on adults with vernacular literacy and transfer literacy to lingua francas, especially Tok Pisin. By the time of Independence it was working in almost 100 languages and had developed literacy programmes in most of them. Today, SIL conducts literacy programmes in all of the 19 provinces covering all age groups and different stages of literacy.

Christian Missions in Many Lands began working in Papua New Guinea in the 1950s and has been active in adult literacy, especially in Tok Pisin. Members of their staff developed a Tok Pisin literacy course called Kisim Save that has been widely used.

During the period leading up to Independence literacy for children was the responsibility of the formal education system which was in English. Adult literacy was given very low priority by the government and the fact that it existed at all was due to the commitment of NGOs.

B. After Nation-hood

1. National Constitution

The Constitution states that each individual has the right to literacy in the vernacular, a national lingua franca (Tok Pisin or Hiri Motu) and/or English. In essence it is a multilingual literacy policy which states that a person should be literate in any language he or she uses. The constitution does not specify how this is to be accomplished other than to encourage government departments and NGOs to become active in literacy. Until 1989 there were no serious efforts by the government to enable the general populace to become literate in the languages of Papua New Guinea.

2.National Education System

The national education system changed very little with Independence. Although unemployment was a growing problem, the education system continued its modernising focus on manpower needs. The consequence was an emphasis on passing exams to continue to higher levels of education with little attention to relevant education for the majority who remained in the villages.

The policy of political decentralisation in which many responsibilities were given to newly formed provincial governments influenced the education system. The national government retained responsibility for the core curriculum in formal education which included English, Science, Mathematics and Social Studies. Provinces were given responsibility for non-formal education and could develop their own curriculum in non-core areas.

3. Maintainance of English only Policy

Independence came to PNG in September 1975 during a time when there was much discussion on the issue of language in education. A proposed five year education plan released in 1973 included the option of using vernaculars and lingua francas in education. Literacy courses were introduced into the University of Papua New Guinea and into some

teachers' colleges. The mainly academic discussions at that time focussed on national language policy and as such had a top-down approach. Those who emphasised the perspective of the student and community spoke of the lack of communication with English as the language of education and of the great waste of effort when the majority of school-leavers could not use English effectively and found it of little benefit in their village life. Those who favoured the retention of English spoke of the problems associated with so many languages : languages without alphabets, no materials, training teachers to teach in vernaculars and the expenses of educational development. However, after Independence the National Executive Council discussed the language issue and decided to retain English as the medium of instruction in the formal education system. English simplified the problem of materials and teacher training.

Political developments at the time of Independence were to have a profound long term influence on language policy. The most economically advanced province, North Solomons, wanted to secede and declared itself an independent republic immediately before Independence. In order to retain it within a unified nation, the national government developed the policy of decentralised government .

4. Socio-economic and cultural concerns regarding Policy

A number of concerns arose over the Westernising, English-only education policy. As mentioned earlier, his policy was developed to provide for the manpower needs of an independent nation and largely ignored the socio-economic and cultural needs of the rural majority. Parents came to expect their children to gain employment after attending school and frustration developed when few school leavers could obtain employment. Many who finished school did not fit into village life which led to boredom, antisocial behavior and urban migration. Surveys in the North Solomons province in the late 1970s confirmed parental concern about social alienation of school-leavers and wanted schools to support local languages and cultures. The result was the development in 1979 of a provincial system of vernacular preschools outside of the formal education system. Assisted by NGOs such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics, other provinces and language

communities developed their own vernacular literacy programmes. This "grass roots" movement expanded during the 1980s to the extent that by the end of the decade the national government responded to by developing a national literacy policy and programme.

III. CURRENT INITIATIVES .

The current dramatic increase in the number and scope of literacy activities in PNG can be attributed to three inter-woven factors : 1) the general dissatisfaction with the existing priorities, 2) the success of several community and provincial level vernacular literacy programmes, and 3) the presence of a large number of school-leavers.

The formal education system has been viewed as a major contributor to the social, cultural, economic and spiritual alienation that is taking place, especially among the nations youth. A Ministerial Committee was formed in 1985 to consider these problems and to prepare a philosophy of education. In 1986, the Philosophy of Education for Papua New Guinea (also known as the Matane Report after the Chairperson, Sir Paulias Matane) was published. Recommendation 12 of the Report stated : "That the vernacular language be used as the medium of instruction in the early years of schooling and English be used in later years."

That recommendation rested heavily on the success of community-based vernacular literacy programmes that had been initiated in the North Solomons and East New Britain provinces in the early 1980s. The Vilis Tokples Schools (Village Vernacular), as they were known, taught children to read and write their own language as well as to know and appreciate their own cultural heritage before they entered grade one of the formal system. Subsequent research and evaluation confirmed what the communities themselves already knew : their children were performing better in the formal system than children who entered grade one with no background in vernacular literacy.

As these kinds of local and regional literacy activities increased , it became apparent that a large number of teachers were required for the implementation of the programme. The large number of school-leavers (one of the problems created by the education system) turned out to be the

major human resource for VTPS and other vernacular literacy programmes around the country.
These three factor contributed significantly to the acceleration of vernacular literacy initiatives in Papua New Guinea.

A. Policy Development

1. National Language and Literacy Policy. In 1989, the National Government initiated a programme to address the need and demand for vernacular literacy. A Language and Literacy Section was created within the Curriculum Development Division of the department of education. A National Literacy Committtee (NLC) was formed to act as advisory board for the Literacy Section. The NLC formulated a Language and Literacy Policy which was later endorsed by the National Department of Education. This policy states that

"……we recommend the development of education programmes to ensure that children, out-of-school youth and adults become literate in Tokples, transfer their skills to Tok Pisin, Hiri Motu, or English and maintain and expand their literacy skills in these languages."

The endorsement of this policy was the first ever effort by the National Education Department towards fulfilling the aspiration of the National Constitution of achieving Universal Literacy in PNG languages.

2. The Literacy and Awareness Programme. The Language and Literacy Policy was endorsed as a component of a larger project, The Literacy and Awareness Programme (LAP).
LAP has been designed to achieve National Objective No. 13 of the National Constitution which aims : " to help people understand the changes occurring in contemporary PNG society and to improve their ability to maintain and enhance this awareness and their participation in development through the improvement of basic literacy and access to development information." This is envisaged to be done through the linkage of literacy programmes with developmental information needed and desired by the local communities. It is hoped that such a linkage will promote participation in development and government.

In addition LAP is seen as a data gathering project which will enable the documentation of all existing and proposed literacy and awareness activities at both the government and NGO level." This data will inturn enable the rationalising of "all existing and proposed literacy and awareness activities at both the government and NGO level for maximum efficiency and impact".

B. Administration.

1. Literacy and Awareness Secretariat. To enable the implementation of LAP, a Literacy and Awareness Secretariat has been established in the Department of Education. In January 1990, the National Literacy and Awareness Council was formed from the National Literacy Committee. The function of the Secretariat and NLAC is to 1) to obtain data on existing and proposed literacy and awareness activities, and 2) to facilitate an inter-sectoral approach to the implementation of literacy and awareness programmes.

2) Language and Literacy section. The Language and Literacy Section that was created in 1989 has been involved in 1) literacy programme planning, 2) the training of literacy personnel, 3) the preparing of literacy materials, and 4) the promoting of literacy and awareness activities (especially related to the International Literacy Year).

3) Provincial level . Coordination of literacy activities in the provinces varies. In some provinces, it is administered by the Provincial Non-formal education officer while the relevant NGOs take on the responsibility in others. Provinces receive minimal financial support from the National government through the Education department.

C. Approaches

Provincial and local initiatives has been the impetus behind much of the current momentum for literacy in PNG. Therefore the National government has taken the role of supporter rather than initiator. This support is given in the following areas : 1) Planning of literacy

programmes, 2) Training of literacy workers, 3) In developing a curriculla for different target groups, 4) Materials writing and production, 5) Some financial assistance.

The literacy task in PNG is a shared responsibility, originating in the local community and /or province, and subsequently supported by the national government. If there is no initiative at the local levels or provincial levels, there will be none by the national government.

D. Extent of Literacy Programmes.

Altogether, there are some 200 separate literacy programmes in all 19 provinces with a total enrolments of 17,500 learners as follows : 1) Vernacular pre-schools =10,000 pupils; 2) Youths Literacy =1,000 pupils; 3) Adults: a) Women = 3,500 b) Men 4,000. On the average, there are 87.5 enrolments for every literacy programme. These figures are small compared to literacy enrolments in other countries and reflect the very small size of many of the languages. Furthermore, in all of the provinces, the majority of the languages still do not have any literacy programmes. In the North Solomons Provinces for example, only 6 out of the 22 languages had literacy programmes and ate up 15% of the Annual Provincial education Budget. In another province (East New Britain) , 5 languages out of the 17 languages had literacy programmes at an annual cost of 10% of the Provincial Education Budget.

Since September 1989, around 1,000 literacy workers have been trained at workshops ranging from 1-4 weeks in duration by the three key organisations. It is clear that as literacy spreads to more languages, so will the financial burden on the sponsoring agencies. It is for this reason that the promotion of literacy in Papua New Guinea, must take on features/characteristics appropriate to the constraints.

IV. FEATURES OF CURRENT INITIATIVES.

A. Integral Human Development.

As mentioned earlier a new Philosophy of Education , which acknowledges the National Goals and Directive Principles enshrined in the Constitution,

was endorsed by the National Education Department. The premise of this philosophy is the development of the individual as a total human being. The philosophy strongly expresses that all education, must meet the social-cultural , spiritual, economic and political needs of the learner. Unlike past literacy programmes in the country, current programmes both by NGOs and the government are very much guided by this philosophy. Community literacy programmes which once only concentrated on literacy per se now include lessons on health, agriculture, banking, environment, conservation etc.

B. Vernacular Literacy

It is significant that a country with more than 860 languages should decide to promote initial-literacy in the vernacular. The vernacular languages are no longer perceived as backward languages which hinder the modernisation of PNG but are seen as essential resources in the education and mobilization of the rural masses in the process of development. The potential problems are staggering. But so is the potential loss to local cultures if vernacular literacy is ignored.

C. Community Based.

With vernaculars being the language of literacy, it is only natural that the programmes be "community based" in all aspects. The literacy programmes are community based with the following functions being vested with the community : 1) planning and management, 2) provision and maintainance of buildings, 3)funding/fund raising, 4) provision of literacy workers - teachers, writers, 5)teachers salaries, 6) writing and production of materials. Infact the National Language and Literacy Policy demands that these functions be in place before any assistance is given from the national level. These functions are done in close consultations with literacy officers from the national level. In the area of training for example, national literacy officers conduct 3-4 week workshops in the host community of the literacy programme.

D. Inter-sectoral Cooperation.

This is a feature that is particularly important with regards to the implementation of the Literacy and Awareness Programme. One of the aims of this programme (from the management point of view) is the rationalisation of resources inorder to achieve maximum utilization). Instead of a proliferation and reduplication of similar activities and same resources amongst Government departments and NGOs, the idea is to share and benefit from each others activities and resources. This cooperation is being realised in the following areas : 1) Planning, 2) Implementation , 3) funding, and 4) Training. The number of NGOs has increased in number and vary from the mission oriented NGOs to those addressing specific developmental issues and particular population targets such as Melanesian Environment Foundation, Partners With Melanesians, Papua New Guinea Development Trust, Young Womens Christian Association and so on.

E. Innovative Teaching Method-"The Multi-Strategy Method"

Much is already known about how people learn to read and write but there is a lot that is still unknown. Many strategies for learning to read and write have been discovered which work in many different socio-cultural and learning situations. The Multi-Strategy Method was developed four years ago in Papua New Guinea by two literacy workers from the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the University of Papua New Guinea, inorder to harness the many strategies that have been developed without too much focus on any one strategy. To utilise the many ways of learning to read and write, the method has two main tracks : the Story Track and the Workbook Track. The Story Track emphasises on holistically acquiring the process of literacy while Workbook Track emphasises on the mechanics of the literacy process - eyes,ears and hand movements. The key to the Workbook Track is analysis and synthesis, so that syllables are focussed on in words , and words are focussed on in sentences.

The theoretical premise in the Story Track follows that of "the inside-out model of reading" (Cambourne 1979 :79), in which the learner uses knowledge or experience from inside of his/her head to the print, while the

Workbook Track relates to the "outside-in model of reading" in which the learner learns to discriminate the print, eventually to form meaning.
The following chart compares the tasks involved in the two approaches :

The processes of reading and writing followed in the Multi-Strategy Method are further shown in the following chart

Experience so far shows that this method is suitable for both adults and children. A longitudinal study is currently underway to ascertain the effectiveness of this method in different learning situations.

F. Innovative Methods of Literacy Training

The training of literacy workers is mostly being done through short 2-4 week workshops in the host provinces and communities of the literacy programmes . There is also a semester long certificate course offered by the University of Papua New Guinea for field workers. Whilst the short workshops as forms of training are in themselves not new, the integration of components, which are in many training courses run separately, is a new approach that is only being tried in PNG for the last 2 years. The general pattern of literacy training courses will normally start with writing the orthography of the language, writing and producing materials, followed by the training of teachers. All these components are done at different times . Such compartmentalised training puts a lot of pressure on time and other resources especially in rural communities where people are dependent on their own labour for survival.
The Integrated method of training, the development of orthographies, the writing and production of materials and the training of teachers is all done in the same workshop by the same trainees. In this type of training the literacy worker is being enabled to be the jack of all trades because in many language communities, he may be the only speaker with some training to perform all these different tasks. The generalist literacy worker also has a very good overview of the whole process of literacy as opposed to a narrow specialised view. A comparative study is currently being commissioned to ascertain the effectiveness of the integrated training method and other methods of training.

G. Developmental Information Workers.

Another area that is included in the integrated training method is the training of "developmental information workers". These are teams of mobile NGO workers who go from province to province facilitating discussions about developmental issues such as forest and logging, fishing, mining, environment and conservation, small scale businesses, womens issues and so on. The discussion may take the form of a formal seminar, or a small village discussion of a developmental activity in the area or it may simply be the viewing of videos on similar issues in the country and elsewhere. Papua New Guinea is going through immensely rapid changes which is causing a lot of social disharmony amongst the people. It has been proven world wide that literacy alone is not enough in bringing about an improved way of life. It is the aim of the mobile awareness workers to help the people understand the developmental changes so that they will be able to make well-informed decisions regarding the management of the resources and their lives in the process of development. The project (Mobile Awareness Workers) has only been in operation since July of this year and is still in the developmental stage.

H. Innovative Methods of Materials Production

With the sudden proliferation of literacy programmes in the country, there is an ever growing demand for literacy materials and resource materials which has brought about the need to look for new and better ways of producing materials. The production of materials at the moment is all commuinity -based. The people themselves write and print the materials under the supervision of an expert or an experienced literacy worker.
However a new method of producing materials has been developed and is being tried now with various programmes in the country . This method combines computer technology with simple community - based methods of producing materials(silkscreen). Using computers, pictures on common socio-cultural, economic, political , spiritual etc themes are drawn, scanned onto computer, printed and distributed to the languages. The pictures books (or shells) that are sent out do not have any written text in

them, and each language group upon receiving the Shell books, write the appropriate text in their own language.

Producing Shell books takes the following 6 steps :

1. Translators receive the Shell Resource Text plus picture pages.
2. The Shell book acts as a resource for translation.
3. Local people translate the text of the Shell book into their own language.
4. The translated text is printed or typed onto stencils using the Picture Pages as guides.
5. The stencils are duplicated onto the picture pages.
6. A new set of books in the local language are ready to be read.

The main advantages of Shell Books:

1. Enables the local communities to produce good quality materials. Locally produced materials are not always of good quality
2. Enables national and provincial writers to produce materials that could be used in all languages by simply writing in the language specific text. The same picture book (shell book) can be used in any number of languages.
3. Because of the very small size of the majority of the languages, it has not been economical to produce good quality materials. Although the initial outlay of setting up the computer facilities may seem expensive, over time this method enables the mass production of quality materials, thus reducing the overall financial burden. Another comparative study is soon to be under way to evaluate the development and implementation of Shell Books in relation to other ways of producing materials.

SUMMARY

Papua New Guinea has made tremendous progress by officially recognizing the value of the vernaculars as a resource in the socio-cultural, economic and political development of the country. Many of the strategies of implementation reflect the peculiarities identified with the current momentum in literacy. The strong lower level involvement in all aspects of literacy (planning, administration, funding, buildings, curriculum, materials, evaluation) differs from the experience of other

countries whose literacy programmes are heavily centralised. The local production of materials is essential for economic and educational and social reasons. Many of these strategies or methods of implementation are being evaluated or in the process of being evaluated.

The problems of achieving universal literacy in a country with 860 languages are enormous. The task however is not impossible if given adequate resources (personnel, funding, facilities).

The World declaration on Education For All calls for the "strengthening of international solidarity in meeting basic learning needs through the sharing of knowledge and experiences, and equitable and fair economic relations". Indeed international cooperation has a role to play in the spread of literacy in Papua New Guinea in just the areas mentioned above. This infact is happening already amongst the three Melanesian countries of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea through the Australian Government sponsored Melanesian Literacy project. Unlike general aid projects which are heavily dependent on expertise and resources from the donor country, Australia is making funds available for Melanesians to be trained as literacy workers by fellow Melanesians in Melanesia itself. So far both Vanuatu and Solomon Islands personnel have received training in Papua New Guinea. The concept of "Mobile Developmental Information Workers" discussed earlier was borrowed by Papua New Guinea from the Solomon Islands Development Trust. This is a NGO whose task is to raise awareness on critical developmental issues affecting the peoples lives.

The sharing of experience, knowledge and funding seem to be the most needy areas of assistance. Funding assistance should be with the aim of enhancing local literacy programmes and funding should reflect the needs of the people themselves.

The availability of expertise in Papua New Guinea does not seem as urgent a problem as it was some years back. Between the government and NGOs collectively, there is a pool of experienced literacy workers who can act as advisors, trainers, and researchers. Because many of these people are heavily committed to their own programmes, mechanisms will have to be developed to free their expertise.

Many of the innovations discussed above will be refined as we go along but the future of literacy in Papua New Guinea certainly has a bright future!

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